

THEY ARE IN LOVE WITH THE INEVITABLE

I read in Robert Lowell that Carl Jung once told Lowell's mother
that her son was "an incurable schizophrenic."

A girlfriend of mine once told me that her former lover
had been labelled by the family psychiatrist
"an incurable schizophrenic."

Then a friend of mine informed me
that his own psychiatrist had assured him
that his former girlfriend was "an incurable schizophrenic."

All of them, psychiatrists and lovers, loved saying it.
You could tell it made them feel authoritative
and relieved them of further concern.

You hear a lot about "incurable alcoholics" too.

Since I am living proof
that "incurable romantics" can be cured,
I hope someday both schizophrenia and psychiatry
will also be.

NOT ONLY CAN'T YOU GO HOME AGAIN, BUT YOU CAN'T GO ANYWHERE
ELSE EITHER

he gets the divorce
and now he is presumably no longer responsible for her.
but when he calls to make sure everything's set
for his weekend with the kids
she says, "by the way,
when did you say i should stop using the health insurance?"

there is a second of astonishment
and then he says, "august 1st. i told you
three different times that you weren't covered
after august 1st. if i could have kept you
on the policy i would have. it wouldn't have cost
me an extra cent, but they assured me it was
strictly illegal."

"i was sure you said i could use it through september.
anyway, i had some tests done ... back in july
... and now they're calling me to come back in
because my pap smear came up positive."

his mind is shaken blank
as by a sonic boom.

"do you think they'll be able to tell
whether or not i'm covered?"

"they'll catch it somewhere along the line;
you've got to go someplace else."

"oh. well, i guess i'll have to put it off then."

so he hangs up and goes to the bathroom
and sobs into a towel

and the girl he lives with is pissed now
because she thinks he's still in love with his wife

and all he can see are the faces of his kids

who love their mother

whom he cannot just let die.

THE GENERATION GAP

(i)

his idea of a vacation
is to hire a chauffeur
and to spend the summer
drinking on the nation's highways.

(ii)

his kid is among the very few
ever to be arrested for possession of marijuana
by the magic mountain security guards,
but he must have inherited
some of his father's instinct for survival
because he got sobered up enough
the last day of his drug abuse class
to go pick up his certificate of rehabilitation.

(iii)

it hangs now in his father's bar.